

**Postcolonial Discourses on
Reconstructing
Han Taiwanese/Indigenous History
and Cultures:
Takes Three Taiwanese Novels-- A
Handful Lotus, Sunset in
Taipei City, and Juvenile Kavalan as
Examples**

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Abstract

This paper works on three Taiwanese novels to explore the colonized: the characters' writing back their own history and cultures, represented by Pang Hsin-ger's (a Taiwanese indigene), Pao-shih's (a Han Taiwanese), and Chiu-yin's (a Han Taiwanese) narration for a cultural identity in the postcolonial texts. Taiwan has been governed by the

Dutch, Japanese, and Kuomintang Government, whilst its people/indigenies were treated as the weak, silenced, and backward “Other,” and its culture was voiced by its formal colonizers as “barbarian.” Narrative techniques like writing back and hybridity reconstruct their national consciousness; moreover, the festive of Han people, the indigenous journey quest to evoke the ethnical collective subconsciousness to regain their ethical identity, as well as to restore self-cultural subjectivity.

Past research articles mostly focused on the study of theme, such as initiation and growth, or cultural indentity and collective memory. Moreover, these three Taiwanese novels are treated as historical narration, emphasizing Taiwanese historical background like the historical : how Taiwanese people lived during the time under Formosa under the Dutch (1624-1662), the Japanese Occupation of Taiwan (1926-1945). This paper uses post-colonial criticism to read Taiwanese Young Adult Novel: employing narrative strategies of writing back to subvert the colonial-text; the colonized voicing out their own silenced-text to re-examine and reconstruct their lost history and cultures during their being colonized period.

Key words : Lotus, Sunset, Kavalan, cultural hegemony, hybridity,
writing back

Postcolonialists such as Franz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Edward Said in *Orientalism* and Gayatri Charkravorty Spivak in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” state that the colonized under imperialism are like the black, wearing white mask under the practice of colonial cultural education and assimilation policy, viewing the self in terms of the white/the colonial, internalizing the white’s deep-rooted racial discrimination to the black’s complex of inferiority and domestication. The imperial intends to control and oppress the colonized by means of discourses and systems on social, political, economic, and cultural construction of power institutionalization to perpetually manipulate the colonized. Hence, the colonized lost their native cultural originality by appropriating and imitating the cultural code of the colonizer as a result of the inferiority complex engendered in the mind of the colonized. European imperialism had dominated and instituted the colonized politically, economically, and culturally; thus, this cultural domestication of the oppressed lost his original identity and had been biased as the barbarian and uncivilized.

In this way, the colonized propose the concepts of hybrid, divergent and interdisciplinary counter-discourse to mirror culture, politics and literature. The post-colonial theory is built around the concept of resistance as subversion, or opposition, or mimicry—but that resistance always inscribes the resisted into the texture of the resisting. This resistance subverts the colonizers’ “Othering” and cultural

hegemony whilst at the same time clarifying the complexities and perplexities around the difficulty of conceiving how a colonized country can reclaim or reconstitute its subjectivity in a culture that is now but was not its own culture. Post-colonial writing de-centers and pluralizes canon, official history and Western hegemony to re-vision History: revising, re-appropriating, or reinterpreting history as a concept, and, in doing so, to articulate new “codes of recognition” (Ashcroft 26) within which those acts of resistance, those unrealized intentions and those re-orderings of consciousness that “History” has rendered the silent or invisible can be recognized as shaping forces in a culture’s tradition.

This article explores three Taiwanese novels-- *A Handful Lotus*, *Sunset in Taipei City*, and *Juvenile Kavalan* as research texts,¹ investigating the characters’ seeking subjectivity which is in turn reflected by Pang Hsin-ger’s, Pao-shih’s, and Chiu-yin’s narration for a cultural identity in the postcolonial world.

The story in *The Handful Lotus*, begins from its source-text Dutch Taiwan, imperial Taiwan like the Portuguese, the Spanish, Dutch and

¹ The three Taiwanese novels-- *A Handful Lotus* (《一把蓮》), *Sunset in Taipei City* (《日落台北城》), and *Juvenile Kavalan* (《少年噶瑪蘭》), published in Chinese and all quotations from Chinese sources are my translations, unless otherwise indicated.

Japanese (representative figure Zheng Zhi-long, also as Nicholas Iquan) chronically colonization of Taiwan, their power competence and conflicts in the South China Sea. The history of Dutch Colonization of Taiwan is woven into the text, exposing how the imperialists exploit and oppress their colonizers in their colony—their means, attempts, greed and unknown dark side, functioning as rewriting and annotating the historical gaps and silences. *The Handful Lotus* can be read as a prequel of Taiwanese history, a Dutch guy Hoffman, who asks Pao-shih to paint a lotus on his bone china, unfortunately broken into pieces by a monkey Ah-zi. To compensate for Hoffman, Cheng-feng Lin promises to leave Pao-shih as the hostage, but himself leaves for the South China Sea to haul up the sunken ship, loaded with bone china, as his paid ransom.

Lin Man-chiu's *Sunset in Taipei* has frequently either been regarded as richly traditional, or as illustrating one of best examples in literary writing of irony. Chia-rong during the period of Japanese Colonization of Taiwan, disappears from home because of his anti-Japanese complex arrested by the Japanese police, his away from home in parallel with the disruption of Taiwan's history, freely filling in by the Japanese such as their compiling Japanese folksong *Sakura* (*Cherry Blossoms*) into Taiwan's national flower and song; transplanting worshipping in Japanese Shrine into part of Taiwan's festive culture to root Japanese nationality into Taiwanese collective unconscious. As

such, this ideology subverts Taiwanese subject from hating Japanese invader to identifying and worshipping them as their own fathers (ancestors). The Kominka Movement (Imperialization) of Taiwan requires Taiwanese to speak Japanese, convert Japanese surname, wear Japanese kimono, and sing Japanese songs to reform Taiwanese ideology thoroughly. Eventually, the Movement's ultimate goal for Taiwanese to regard Japanese emperor as their national spirit to be loyal to and to serve Japanese manpower in expanding their imperialism in South-Asian battles, fulfilling the war purpose of integrating into Imperial Japan. The next generation of Taiwanese learn to sing "Mother's Song" to convey their thanks and gratitude for their Japanese motherland, disconnecting Taiwanese children from their own root.

In *Kavalan*, Pan Hsin-ger's narration of the Kavalan tribal culture, especially the rite of passage, renewing the Han's memories of the Kavalan tribe as well as educating them the complexity and depth of tribal culture and history.

It investigates the periods of Dutch Formosa, the Japanese colonization, and the Kuomintang Government rule since 1949, and how Taiwanese Hans and aborigines² were doubled as the weak,

² The phrase 'Taiwanese Hans' alludes to an ethnic subgroup of Han Chinese native to Taiwan and other minor outlying islands controlled by the Republic of

silenced, backward “Other,” in an attempt to reclaim and rebuild their cultural identity by means of writing back technique, inclusive of the Taiwanese indigenous/Han Taiwanese consciousness and hybridity, plus Han Taiwanese festive reconstruction and the indigenous tribal quest, revoking their collective memory of cultural subjectivity with their tribe, whilst displaying the depth and perspectives of the Taiwanese indigenous/Han Taiwanese people’s history and society, the values of traditional rites, festivities and ritual narrative in resisting the dominance of cultural hegemony, and voicing out both the autonomy and practice of cultural identity of the Taiwanese indigenous/Han Taiwanese.

Taiwan was ceded to Japan since 1895 under the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, to sever their link between Chinese and Taiwanese cultures. During 50-year rule of Taiwan, the Japanese Colonial Government banned Taiwanese writers to write in Chinese and forced them to learn Japanese and adopt it in writing. After Japan’s defeat in the Second World War, the Kuomintang Government, replacing the Japanese government, took over Taiwan and banned

China. They comprise the largest ethnic group in Taiwan constituting 95 to 98 percent of the Taiwanese population. ‘Taiwanese indigenes’ are the indigenous peoples of Taiwan, who number more than 530,000 and constitute nearly 2.3% of the island’s population.

Japanese and Taiwanese dialects in writing. The Kuomintang Government instituted a mono-language policy in Taiwan. Intent on politically promoting the Chinese language and eradicating the influence left by the Japanese, The Kuomintang Government officials devised their language policy under the guiding principle of allowing only Mandarin Chinese, while banning other Chinese dialects. The Government set its goal to instill Mandarin through the education system along with the use of administrative resources, social education and the mass media as well as by restricting and forbidding the use and broadcasting of Japanese and the native Taiwanese languages of the country's various ethnic groups. This language hegemony destroyed and terminated any potentiality of Taiwanese writers in writing, because Mandarin Chinese was a new language to them and their second native language Japanese then was prohibited. Taiwanese culture is disconnected from its past. This cultural gap damaged by language hegemony can never be abridged.

There are two elements in Taiwanese culture—the Han Taiwanese and the Taiwanese indigenous. The process of appropriation is intimately connected with this duality. Similar to what P.R. Stephensen claims, Taiwanese culture is as the native plant “fertilized by phosphates from all countries” (Barnes 1969: 211). Such a culture cannot be authentic, but a culture immersed indigenously in the new soil. The available codes of expression seemed to be the Colonialized

Taiwan: the Colonial Dutch, Japanese, and Han's cultures, and, moreover, since the codes are foreign, there is an impulse to fight for literary recognition which will validate the Taiwanese post-colonial writing in the eyes of the colonial world.

The purpose of post-colonial writing is to overthrow the stereotypical image of the colonizer as superior and civilized. The goal of post-colonial writers lies in reconstructing the Taiwanese indigenous/Han Taiwanese people's identity and history, departing from the stereotype of undeveloped, barbarian and non-historical, but by reconstructing their culture and history like festivities, sacrifice and rites as their collective unconscious to historicize their past as well as their means of resistance and anti-hegemony. Both in refuting the superior image of the colonizer and reminding the tribes of Taiwanese indigenous of their own cultures and values as the means to declare the Taiwanese indigenous culture, writing back (the empire) as post-colonial discourse reclaims the colonial history to replace the colonizer's such as the missionary's, which is the stereotype of the colonized. These three Taiwanese novels can correct the past colonizer's image of distortion like the Dutch (1624-1662) and Japanese (1895-1945) countering the Han Taiwanese, and the Taiwanese indigenous people, and rewrite the oppressed festivities or ritual sacrifices to reconstruct tribal cultures as new post-colonial discourses. Narrative writing has long been considered as the effective

way to present culture and writing back is the very way in re-writing cultural discourses on imperial hegemony as well as releasing the colonized from their dependence on the imperial discourse and then, beginning their self-history, geography and politics. In this process, the post-colonial writers use the same language and literary structures which they wish to subvert through literature. This “paradox” of post-colonial literature is by appropriating these inherited literary modes for new subversive ends and also trying to recover the remains of the often neglected native literary traditions.

The narrative strategies of writing back include three kinds: first, the colonized subvert the source-text; second, the silenced voice out on their own; and third, abrogating and appropriating the colonizer’s discourses. These writing strategies, not only allow the colonizer and the missionary to see the trauma they created for the colonized, but also teach the colonized to re-examine what they lost in the past. The problem with glossing in the cross-cultural texts is that it may lead to a considerably stilted movement of plot as the story is forced to draw an explanation or footnoting behind it. In *The Empire Writes Back*, “[t]he requisite sense of difference is implicitly recorded in the gap between the word and its referent, a ‘referent’ which (ironically) accords the English word the status of the ‘real.’ This absence, or gap, is... but positive in its effect” (Ashcroft et al. 61). A Canadian author Dennis Lee also reckons that “this gap is both the site and the challenge of the

post-colonial writer” (Lee 1974, 141) to explore this gap, its acceptance, and its bridge as the legitimate subject-matter of the post-colonial writing.

Re-narrating stories is the extension of deconstructing and its main purpose is to abridge gaps and silences among paragraphs. Further abrogation and appropriation can be replaced by other texts and ideologies or re-organize the colonized own norms and principles of canonical texts. The post-colonial literature needs to rebuild its own canon and tradition because the colonial discourses never bring in the colonized’s culture and literature which wouldn’t interest and appeal to them at all, always in lack and silence, not part of their mainstream literature, but the Other.

In *Lotus*, Pao-shih voices out the reality of imperialism: “It’s so obvious for them (imperialists) to occupy our land, but they still justify it is fair and reasonable” (125). Such writing for post-colonial writers, “whose gaze is turned in two directions, stands already in that position which will come to be occupied by an interpretation, for he/she is not the object of an interpretation, but the first interpreter. Editorial intrusions, such as the footnote, the glossary, and the explanatory preface,... are a good example of this” (Ashcroft al. 60). Positioned outside the text, they stand for a reading, interpreting the intertextuality of the Other. The novelist not only rewrites and challenges the stereotype of Taiwanese through imperial Japanese eyes, but also from

a Taiwanese viewpoint re-narrating and responding to imperial Japanese discourse. Therefore, *Sunset in Taipei* is by all means an anti-imperialist document, attacking all imperialism. Thus, by means of Ito's rethinking of Japanese imperialism, which is exemplified in her boyfriend's last letter: "I don't understand why must I hurt so many innocent Chinks" (60)? Ito's dedication to Taiwan's education can be seen as "the thinnest remedy for the imperial Japanese" (61)! Taiwanese students love and appreciate Ito very much. On her returning day to Japan, Chiu-yin's mom has to steam a piece of Chinese cake as a farewell gesture to signify her thanks to her.

Out of dissatisfaction with the imperialism, an episode in *Sunset in Taipei* resists the imperial text like "Worshipping at Japanese Shrine," the Japanese teacher educates their colonized children with an imperialist tone: "Quiet! Quiet! We are not going outing today. It is to worship Yoshihisa Shrine which is a solemn thing to do. Why so noisy" (44)? The silent colonized are like stated in the text: "...the children waiting outside the Shrine, whether finish or not finish their worshipping, neither can talk, nor can move, just like the way their bodies tied up with ropes and gagged mouths so unbearable" (45). This silence is caused by the failure to "control the means of communication":

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Kavalan tribe as well as educating them the complexity and depth of tribal culture and history. In *Kavalan*, the cultural and generation gaps between Pan Hsin-ger and his grandpas are filled with episodes like Pan's time travel to return to the summer in 1900, along with Ho Sher-shan and Shaw Zu-yo, entertained by Chia-li tribe. To Pan's surprise, he finds every Kavalan characterizes himself with folding mark on the thumb, which he himself doesn't want to admit it, as Kavalan's identity. Moreover, the woman repeatedly appeared in his dream turns out to be Spring's mother, Hu-ba, the tribal witch. Spring, the representative tribal girl, whose stereotypical destiny is to be sold to prostitute in Han's cities, is rescued on her way to prostitution.

Later, Hai-shen's returning footnotes/annotates the history of Koxinga's sailing across the Taiwan Strait to Taiwan, the first Han Chinese leader to hold political power in the history of Taiwan. Witch Hu-ba lost her daughter Spring and Liu Ming-dung's stone tablet inscribed: *Conquest of Barbarians*, indicating his governing period to defend and guard Lan Yan Plain—conquering uncivilized and domesticated barbarians. On Spring's returning and Pan's familiarity with Chia Li Yen village, with the feeling of "it seems that I've been here," suggesting aboriginal collective identity of home-coming.

The strategy of writing back applies itself in *The Handful Lotus*, which employs the marginal and female character like Pao-shih and Chiu-yin to question the justification of imperial invasion of Taiwan

and enslavement of the Taiwanese. In *Kavalan*, the boy Pan Hsin-ger, the central character narrates the whole story. Postcolonial writing uplifts the marginal characters as the focal narrators and their importance is never recognized in the colonial discourses, issues like race, trade, and enslavement challenging the imperial hegemony and forming these heteroglossal and dialogical dialectic.

But in the questions which post-colonial texts posed, in their radical attempts to address the issues of language, reality, and their inherited and now troubling assumptions, there was a necessary to subvert the colonial texts.

The victimized Taiwanese position is posited not only by the evident political circumstances of domination of the Netherlands, Japan, and the Quing Dynasty, but by the language. Taiwan does not have its own language, but is forced to adopt its colonial language, like Roma Pinyin, Japanese, and Chinese, in a position closer as feminist theorists, pointing out to that of the position of women.

The colonial writers does not have words of his own. Is it not possible that he projects his own condition of voiceless into whatever he creates? that he articulates his own powerlessness, in the face of alien words, by seeking out fresh tales of victims?...perhaps the colonial imagination is driven to recreate, again and again, the experience of writing in colonial space...

(Lee 1974: 1621)

Lee notes that the first necessity for the colonial writers is for their “imagination” to “come home,” but their “words of home are silent.” Lee reckons that “perhaps our [post-colonial writers’] job is..., but rather to find words for our space-lessness...”(163). Lee solves both the problem of the transplanted post-colonial space, and avoiding the indefensible nationality.

The story in *The Handful Lotus*, begins from its colonial-text Dutch Taiwan, imperial Taiwan like the Portuguese, the Spanish, Dutch and Japanese : representative figure Zheng Zhi-long, also as Nicholas Iquan, chronically colonizing Taiwan, their power competence and conflicts in the South China Sea. The history of Dutch Colonization of Taiwan is woven into the text, displaying how the imperialists exploit and suppress their colonizers in their colony, functioning as rewriting and annotating the historical gaps and silences.

The novelists by their writing, provide an antidote to cure the indigenous people collectively. *The Handful Lotus* can be read as a prequel of Taiwanese history, a Dutch guy Hoffman, who asks Pao-shih to paint a lotus on his bone china, unfortunately broken into pieces by a monkey Ah-zi. To compensate for Hoffman, Cheng-feng Lin promises to leave Pao-shih as the hostage, but himself leaves for the South China Sea to haul up the sunken ship, loaded with bone china, as his paid

ransom. In *Kavalan*, Pan Hsin-ger's narration of the Kavalan tribal culture, especially the rite of passage, renewing the Han's memories of the Kavalan tribe as well as educating them the complexity and depth of tribal culture and history. This writing awakens the Han's imperial ideology and ends their time. Its open ending invites the reader's participation and characterizes the post-colonial writing strategy.

In the process of narrating, the sameness and differences between the Dutch and Han people are compared and analyzed. The central characters are both female and children in three novels. A child/adolescent cannot be considered as a man yet, more as a female-like character. The female are the symbolic marginal characters of the post-colonial discourses. Three female characters see the same historical events from different perspectives as heteroglossal dialectic, individual narrating as each own text, and the reader need to make up their own minds to see Taiwan history. John McLeod in *Beginning Postcolonialism* summarizes as follows:

A re-writing does much more than merely "fill in" the gaps perceived in the source-text. Rather, it enters into a productive critical dialogue with the source-text. A re-writing takes the source-text as a point of inspiration and departure, but its meanings are not fully determined by it. A re-writing often exists to resist or challenge colonialist representations of colonized peoples

and cultures perceived in the source-text and popular readings of it. In this way we might consider a re-writing of a “classic” text as “postcolonial”. A re-writing often implicates the reader as an active agent in determining the meanings of literary “classics” are not without their problems which must also be faced when exploring the interface between the source-text and the re-writing.

(McLeod 168)

Re-narrating/re-writing fills in the neglected absence of source-text; instead, writing the Han/aboriginal silences to resist imperial text, in allusion to the absent text, like Pan’s time/aboriginal travel, the story of Spring’s missing as a mystery, the legend of sunken ship, and the disappearance of Pao-shih’s father, Lin Cheng-feng, and the missing Chen Chia-rong. These examples reconfirm that absence which lies at the point of interface between the two cultures. Although language does not embody culture, and therefore proposes no essential difficulties to the communication of meaning, the notion of difference, of an indecipherable connection between cultural realities, is often constructed in the text as that of identity. These texts of travels, although language does not embody culture stories, legends and disappearances, need the novelists and readers to fill in, allude and differentiate. Pan’s cultural discourse on the aborigine, not directly and the consequent exchange between the witch Hu-ba and old man. This

does not mean that the Kalavan have not its own culture once the whole context is re-filled, but rather that the process of allusion installs historical distance itself as a subject of the text.

Postcolonial texts may indicate difference in their representations of place, naming, and through the development of themes. But it is in the culture that the curious tension of colonial revelation and colonized silence is manifested. Most of these strategies, in which difference is constructed and appropriated, are shared by all the colonized societies as polyglossic. Pao-shih's and Chiu-yin's Han identity stuck in Dutch and Han, Japanese and Han which overlaps the previous one, the silenced female under the imperialism, now speak out loud to resist, to interrogate, and to subvert the imperial texts, intending to reconstruct the truth of Han/aboriginal texts. The synecdochic function of such strategies is to bridge between the "center" and "margin," eventually defining their unbridgeable gaps.

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outside the text, they stand for a reading, interpreting the intertextuality of the Other. The novelist not only rewrites and challenges the stereotype of Taiwanese through imperial Japanese eyes, but also from a Taiwanese viewpoint re-narrating and responding to imperial Japanese discourse. Therefore, *Sunset in Taipei* is by all means an anti-imperialist document, attacking all imperialism. Thus, by means of Ito's rethinking of Japanese imperialism, which is exemplified in her boyfriend's last letter: "I don't understand why must I hurt so many innocent Chinks" (60)? Ito's dedication to Taiwan's education can be seen as "the thinnest remedy for the imperial Japanese" (61)! Taiwanese students love and appreciate Ito very much. On her returning day to Japan, Chiu-yin's mom has to steam a piece of Chinese cake as a farewell gesture to signify her thanks to her.

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communication”:

Beneath the words our absentee masters have given us, there is an undermining silence. It saps our nerve. And beneath that silence, there is a raw welter of cadence that tumbles and strains toward words and that makes the silence a blessing because it shushes easy speech. That cadence is home The impasse of writing...is transcended only when the impasse becomes its own subject, when writing accepts and enters and names its own condition as it is naming the world. (Lee, 1974: 165, 166)

What Lee emphasizes here is that silence itself should be appropriated and adopted as the productive land for an indigenizing literature. From this silence, the truth of imperial Japanese intrusion into Taiwan is stated as follows:

inside the wrinkled paper, drawing a man with a sword, his foot stepping on a thing like a watermelon, by its side written “the Japanese thief to take over Taiwan is—Yoshihisa,...Yoshihisa is the one who we come to worship today!” Zheng Yu-ting realizes her great discovery, continues: “See, so many words after that.” Li Chun-mei thinks her discovery more worthy to note and read it: “In 1895, the Qing Dynasty’s cession of Taiwan to Japan. The

Japanese, led by Prince Yoshihisa, landed near Keelung to occupy Taiwan, and slaughter Taiwanese people...” (42-7)

These notes inscribe the most true Taiwanese history under the Japanese occupation—the source-text, and then, by Chia-hsin’s mouth as the colonized to question the colonizer: “How cruel the act is! Let Taiwanese children to worship and thank their ancestors’ slaughters and land occupants” (44).

The source of this subversive capacity in Taiwan novelists originates from the unique conception of textuality in traditional Kavalan culture. The land itself provides as a dreaming world as well as a text of recording each individual’s life and experience in it. The novelist embodies the mythic time of dreamland in his writing, a reworking of the basic text of mythic experience which is written on the land itself. In terms of their own developing writing, however, the position of the Kavalan is a special one because they are “doubly marginalized—pushed to the psychic and political edge of societies which themselves have experienced the dilemma of colonial alienation” (Ashcroft et al. 142). For this, they demonstrate a capacity to subvert “received assumptions about literature.” The link with the land and its effects on indigenous textuality, maybe can be “writers from these societies seize the post-colonial means of communication in a different way from its appropriation in colonial cultures” (143).

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The concept of allusion is referred to: "perform the same function of registering cultural distance in the post-colonial text, according to the extent to which the text itself provides the necessary context for the allusion" (Ashcroft et al. 56). Allusion to absent texts like the legend of ancient sunken ship, Taiwan as Formosa attracts/magnets Western and Eastern imperialists' predation. Formosa was considered as a barbarian land, is reconstructing its misread and miswritten history after her experiences in Dayuan (Taiwan's previous name). Later, Hai-shen's returning footnotes/annotates the history of Koxinga's sailing across the Taiwan Strait to Taiwan, the first Han Chinese leader to hold political power in the history of Taiwan. Witch Hu-ba lost her daughter Spring

and Liu Ming-dung's stone tablet inscribed: *Conquest of Barbarians*, indicating his governing period to defend and guard LanYan Plain—conquering uncivilized and domesticated barbarians. On Spring's returning and Pan's familiarity with Chia Li Yen village, with the feeling of “it seems that I've been here,” suggesting indigenous collective identity of home-coming.

Homi Bhabha in the article “On Mimicry and Man” of *Location of Culture*, first mentions the concept of mimicry:

Mimicry is, then, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which “appropriates” the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both ‘normalized’ knowledges and disciplinary powers.”

(Bhabha 86)

So mimicry is an ironic compromise, meaning that the colonized's mimicry is a modified, recognizable Other: “...slightly different and almost the same subjects (applicable to Taiwanese here), but not quite” (86). Such prejudiced differences lie in the incomplete mimicry, like the twisted reflection in the mirror which distorts the colonized's true

identity. Thus, the sense of superiority of Japanese imperialism penetrates through *Sunset in Taipei* as its keynote. Yamato (Japanese) nationality occupies and governs Taiwan, with its superior, unsurpassable showing-off power and hegemony. Japanese songs and music are everywhere in Beitou streets. Japanese style of clothes, mocha (glutinous rice balls) all are recognizable signs of Japanese culture. Ah-sang is representative of the mimicry type: making friends with Japanese, especially those who are against Japan won't have a good ending" (68). Ah-sang kicks and adopts Japanese name as Okana Tanaka, and speaks Japanese. The nationalist critics can metaphorically read the text of Lin Man-chiu to find ironic moments and tonalities within a reading as de-colonized novel.

The conditions of producing novels are fully and veritably reproduced at all perspectives of the text. When these conditions are realized by a unique critical practice, the text can be liberated from the dominant modes of the colonialist kind and reconstructed as a sign of an adequate post-colonial practice.

In *Lotus*, Shaw is another example of the Dutch mimicry type, who doesn't understand why Dica resists his identity. In *Kavalan*, Pan cannot identify with his aboriginal identity at the beginning, always domesticate himself into the culture of Han cities, is, more or less, kind of mimicry. The early image of Taiwan spread in Fukien is as "a barbarian land," "poisonous snakes and violent beasts," and "diseased

smokes and poisonous rain” (*Lotus*, 71, 89), an outland. Taiwan, such an outland provides the imperialist like the Dutch, Japanese and Han the opportunities to invade Taiwan. In the eyes of Japanese, Taiwanese are “Chinks,”(60) “Bagayela (Assholes)!” (18) Excuses like paying loyalty to domesticate Taiwanese children’s thanks to Japan and eventually turns the theme song *Seeing Soldiers Off* to be loyal to Japan as Taiwan’s motherland justified as “glorious mission” (94). The victory-homecoming of the Imperial Japanese army becomes Taiwanese subjects’ longing glory; in *Lotus*, Taiwanese are so honest that the Dutch came far away from Europe to provide Taiwanese and Pinpu people a better life. For this, Taiwanese dedicate their land to get Dutch’s protection; Kavalan’s group in Han’s eyes are so “good and simple” that Spring, the aboriginal girl is brought to prostitution, proving Han people’s robbing the aborigine of their land and property, by means of goods or money.

Subverting the imperialists like the Dutch, Japanese, and Han’s stereotypical image of Taiwanese as well as educating the colonizer’s realization of the colonized’s cultural significance, Lin Man-chiu employs an object, a blue and porcelain as the signifier to symbolize the Han’s collective unconscious. Sign and signals, tradition and ritual, are agents of a powerful enforcement which, through its self-referentialty, maintains the centrality of Kalavan and his control over tribe like the old man, Dica and Pan Hsin-ger as representatives of

newer generation. The novelist in *Kavalan*, introduces the traditional rituals and customs of the aboriginal, their festivities, mythological rites.

“Marginality is the condition constructed by the posited relation to a privileged center, an ‘Othering’ directed by the imperial authority. But the abrogation of that center does not involve the construction of an alternative focus of subjectivity, a new ‘center’ “ (Ashcroft et al. 102-3). Taiwanese novelists draw their energies from a vision of marginality, “and particularly of the intersection of different kinds of marginality, which dismantles all notions of a center to consciousness and self” (also Ashcroft 103). The “marginal” and the “central” are grounded in and alienated from colonial body. *Sunset in Taipei* narrates how the significance of Taiwanese’s reunion feast on the Chinese New Year Eve. The novelists intend to by means of their writing, reconstruct and reinforce the collective nationality and tribal group identity. The episode of Chinese New Year dates describe poor Taiwan under Japanese Colonization only on this special occasion, Taiwanese people can eat slightly better than usual. Boiling hot and good smelling reunion feast, the signified Taiwanese festivity, the bustling occasion. The novelist employs the child character Chiu-yin to introduce Taiwan festive culture to Ito (representing Japanese), portraying Taiwan history, strengthening collective unconscious of ethnic group such as symbolic meaning of the Taiwanese cake, leek,

sugar cane and gold ingot ashes, including leaving an empty seat and chopsticks for an absent family member. The significance of Chinese New Year for Taiwanese, it is not only their cultural activity, but also passing down rituals of family history and glorious past: worshipping your ancestors, eating the Taiwanese cake, circulating the fireplace and dining the feast, giving red envelope money and staying late all night to pray for a new year's good luck for the whole family. In the process of introducing this culture to Japanese, it is both the technique of writing back, and reconstructing history and culture of Taiwanese ethnic groups.

The indigenous rite of passage is described in Chapter sixteen of *Kavalan*, titled as "Rite of Passage of Ancient Time," recording the whole process of Pan's ancestor Bob's hunting of boar to characterize the culture and spirit of Kavalan's warrior's strength, bravery, and vitality. This process of boar-hunting provides Pan the opportunity to re-experience Kavalan's tradition. However, the process of this discovery involves a return to the centre, an inevitable rite of passage. On the one hand, it is a homecoming to some ancestral certainty. Thus, Bob and his sister gives the necklace made of boar's teeth, the signifier of a Kavalan, as a gesture for their encounter, indicating bridging in different generations. Further to that, a new life is born to represent the inheritance of the tribal tradition and to symbolize their ancestors' optimism and efforts. Although they used to be called

“Barbarians” by Han people, they are not barbarians at all, just living a different life from Han’s. The *Kavalan* is the continuous manifestation of absence, for instance, being continually written by Pan’s own life, who avoids in the past and regains his tribal culture in the post-colonial experience.

The theme of writing back lies in the self-identification of nationality and ethnic groups, the change and reconstruction of self-nation and ethnic groups. The above-discussed three novelists all end their novels by homecoming as the strategy of writing back. The history of the colonized is stated in two parts, divided by imperialists’ invasion. The theme of writing back in *Lotus*, begins with Hai-shen’s disappearance for the treasure of sunken ship, and eventually his re-appearance in Kuei’s home. This plot records with details a history—changes of Western sea power and hegemony from Spain, to Holland, to westernized Japan; the establishment of Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) replacing Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), including Taiwan into her territory; Zheng Chih-lung’s surrender to the Qing Dynasty; Koxiga Zheng Cheng-kung’s recovery of Taiwan as a base to overthrow the Qing Dynasty (270-271). The ceremonial episode of Dutch’s receiving Taiwanese land, symbolized by coconuts and betel nuts in the previous part of novel, signifying Taiwanese will to be governed by the Dutch. The missionaries were responsible for setting up school in the villages under Dutch rule, teaching not only the religion of the colonialists but

also other skills such as reading and writing. Prior to Dutch arrival, the native inhabitants did not use writing, and the missionaries created a number of Romanization schemes for the various Formosan languages. In Campell's *An Account of Missionary Success in the Island of Formosa: Published in London in 1650 and Now Rreprinted with Copious Appendices*, vol. I, some Dutch missionaries were killed by aboriginals to whom they tried to convert:

The catechist, Daniel Hendrickx, whose name had been often mentioned, accompanied this expedition to the south, as his great knowledge of the Formosa language and his familiar intercourse with the natives, rendered his services very valuable. On reaching the island of Pangsuy, he ventured—perhaps with overweening confidence in himself—too far away from the others, and was suddenly by a great number of armed natives, who, after killing him, carried away in triumph his head, arms, legs, and other members, even his entrails, leaving the mutilated trunk behind.

(198)

In Campbell's *Formosa under the Dutch: Described from Contemporary Records*, after a year in residence in the region of Tayouan (present-day Tainan), Candidius commented regarding his missionary duties that:

I have used great diligence to learn their language, and from the outset to instruct them in the Christian faith; and I have succeeded so far that a fortnight before Christmas of the year 1628 there were a hundred and twenty-eight persons who knew the prayers and were able to answer in the most satisfactory manner with regard to the principal articles of our Christian faith; but for certain reasons none of these have been baptized. (25)

The Japanese rob Taiwan of their Formosa sika deer (a preserved animal in Japan) and ship back deer skins to their country, or the Han people from Fuchou like deer horns, which are various levels and history of imperialists: the Dutch, the Japanese, and the Han people, to colonize Taiwan.

Within the syncretic reality of a post-colonial society it is impossible to return to an idealized pre-colonial cultural condition. Lin Man-chiu's *Sunset in Taipei* has frequently either been regarded as richly traditional, or as illustrating one of the best examples in literary writing of irony. Chia-rong during the period of Japanese Colonization of Taiwan, disappears from home because of his anti-Japanese complex arrested by the Japanese police, his away from home in parallel with the disruption of Taiwan's history, freely filling in by the Japanese such as their compiling Japanese folksong *Sakura* (*Cherry Blossoms*)

into Taiwan's national flower and song; transplanting worshipping in Japanese Shrine into part of Taiwan's festive culture to root Japanese nationality into Taiwanese collective unconscious. As such, this ideology subverted Taiwanese subject from hating Japanese invader to identifying and worshipping them as their own fathers (ancestors). The Kominka Movement (Imperialization) of Taiwan requires Taiwanese to speak Japanese, convert Japanese surname, wear Japanese kimono, and sing Japanese songs to reform Taiwanese ideology thoroughly. Eventually, the Movement's ultimate goal for Taiwanese to regard Japanese emperor as their national spirit to be loyal to and to serve Japanese manpower in expanding their imperialism in South-Asian battles, fulfilling the war purpose of integrating into Imperial Japan. The next generation of Taiwanese learn to sing "Mother's Song" to convey their thanks and gratitude for their Japanese motherland, disconnecting Taiwanese children from their own root. Therefore, the strategy of writing back employed by Taiwan's novelists is to educate both the imperial Japanese and colonized Taiwanese to realize the history of Taiwan as the truth of the one worshipped at the Japanese Shrine is that Prince Yoshihisa represents Japanese nationality machine to suppress and take over Taiwan forty years ago and serving imperial Japanese army turn out to be the Imperial Japanese Empire's anonymous battlefield ashes. After fifty years of Japanese colonization, Taiwan through the mouth of Chia-rong on his homecoming speaks out:

“Japanese unconditional official surrender signed to return that Japanese occupation of Chinese land including Manchuria, Formosa and Pescadores Islands to Chiang Kai-shek” (187). From this moment on, the history of Taiwan is re-written.

In *Kavalan*, the novelist Li Tung records the history of Pinpu tribe in Yilan and Lodung areas as well as aboriginal culture of their tradition and rituals—traditional festivities, content of their rituals and birth of a new life to symbolize and bridge the past and the future of the tribe. The Han people not only learn to respect the history of tribal inheritance and rebirth, but also from books criticize how the Han people’s robbing the aborigine of their land by force and trickery. For example, once landing on it and knowing the barbarians’ scruple and respect for their gods and spirits, the Han people freely throw away dead bodies of animals and beasts to rid the aborigine of their land. Knowing this history, pain-stricken Pan Hsin-ger accuses both the Han people of their barbarian conduct, and reminding himself of his own valuable tribal inheritance and reincarnation. This insightful recognition of his own tribe after his time travel, from his most unwanted admittance of his own blood and identity to proudly identity with his own tribe, Pan Hsin-ger is the representative character to solidify the aboriginal cultural discourse.

After the arrival of imperialists, the fragmental representation of process of the warriors/samurais/Dica/Chia-rong’s boar-hunting/against

the Dutch/against the Japanese are concretized in the written texts. But the internal conflicts of the colonizers like Dica's captive by his tribal people for not to run away, but Pao-shih's questioning his tribe for not being objective; the flattery of Ah-shen and staff in the canteen and their fawning to the Japanese; Pan Hsin-ger's whole-hearted hiding his original outlook and assimilating himself into the urban Hans. The hero/heroines Dica (aborigine) and Pao-shih (girl) are all marginal characters and resist against and challenge the representative figures of imperialists. For example, when Dica is hurt, Pao-shih interrogates his tribes' silence confronting with the Dutch's land dedication ceremony, and speaks up the true historical reality as: "many European people attack our local tribes by means of cannons and guns" (124) and "It's so obvious that they (the Dutch) occupy our land by force, but justify it fair and reasonable" (125).

The indigenous culture of the colonized is shocked to collapse when facing the western missionaries who are pioneers of the colonizer and their mission is to challenge the law and custom, maintaining the traditional practices of the colonized. The representative figure of the Dutch missionary is Reverend Gandhinji and Shaw as the subsidiary, and their urge upon Pao-shih to join their group is significant. The missionary teaches the local children to learn their Roma Pinyin to study the Bible, to learn fundamental nursing, and to have a better life blessed by God. "The Dutch get the tribe's trust by their belief and

medical treatment. Furthermore, they dedicate coconuts and betel nuts as a symbol of their land to the Dutch” (125). The counter-missionary in the case of imperial Japanese are the pioneer educators like Ito. The function of education is to remove and destroy the root of Taiwanese cultural ideology. Even Ito worries Taiwanese children eventually “will cut themselves from their original root” (62), under Japanese institutionalizing education of Taiwan. The modern urban Hans employ mass media like film, television, and broadcasting to assimilate their citizens’ ideology and values.

Colonial discourse distorts Taiwan (the colonized) historical discourse as dedicating coconuts and betel nuts as symbol of giving over land to the Dutch and accepting their governance. The Japanese Empire is described as Taiwanese motherland and gloriously fighting for the imperialist Japan activates their loyalty to Japanese emperor. The barbarians’ fear of gods and spirits leaves the Hans the great opportunities to freely obtain the aborigine’s land and property. The purpose of post-colonial writing is to overthrow the imperialists’ untrue discourses and distortions and miswriting. Thus, these three Taiwan novelists in the act of writing their novels resist the distorted texts and abrogate the gaps of the silenced texts by the imperial hegemony on the colonized. The motivation of writing back focuses on specific geographical ethnic groups like the Hans/Pinpu tribe in Zeelandia/Tayuan (Taiwan’s previous name), Taiwan’s citizens in

Beitou and Grassy Hill in Taipei city, and the Kavalan in Yilan plain to re-narrate their past history and prospect of now and future destiny.

The characteristics of writing-back strategy are textual hybridity, which is represented in *Lotus* as Chinese art of porcelain in centuries, the specific painting technique of the handful lotus; Dutch songs and dance; the shooting and hunting of Pinpu tribe; the history of Hans' crossing over the Black Strait to Taiwan; the list of western imperial hegemony like the Dutch, the Spanish, the Portugal, and the British, then the Japanese Empire's power struggle on sea, mixing together in their discourses. In *Sunset in Taipei*, Japanese-like life situation is duplicated and catalogued as Japanese songs, Japanese language, Japanese costume, and Japanese Shrine, in parallel with the festive and traditional Chinese New Year dates in Taiwan. In *Kavalan*, especially the Taiwanese Hans' ceremony of Pole-climbing as the general salvation ceremony before closing the gates of the netherworld in Taiwan's ghost month, as well as the Kavalan's ceremony of rite of passage in boar-hunting, now and past, cataloging with the film *Ghost*, *The Superman III* and Ming-Dung Liu's stone tablet inscribed as *Conquest of Barbarians*, a mixture of abrupt and grotesque, both refreshing the reader's reading experience and re-thinking dialectically the discourses between the colonial and post-colonial to be expected to re-establish the autonomy of new culture.

Though Taiwanese Hans under the imperial Dutch and Japanese

colonization, and the Taiwanese indigenes under the governance of Qing dynasty, have to wear the imperial masks to examine their own self-culture, the deep-rooted and internalized trauma marked and created by various imperialists required a long healing period. The most effective way to cure this internalized colonized inferiority complex is to restore the colonized's language and culture, to exclude the values and standards of the colonialists to see his/her own culture, estranging and alienating, whilst at the same time rooting out the colonized's dependence and inferior complex. These three novels rewrite the past history, represent language and culture, change the colonialists' stereotypical discourses on the Hans'/the indigenous history and traditional cultures. Their ultimate goal is to let the imperialists and the whole world to know Han Taiwanese/the aborigines from respective angels to truly realize contemporary Han Taiwanese/ indigenous societies and cultures.

The removal of Taiwanese martial law in 1987 tended to both the reconstruction of self-cultural identification and pursuit of cultural subjectivity. From the perspective of cultural creation and productivity as well as the indigenous history, the process of Han Taiwanese/indigenous cultures and history from deconstructing to reconstructing. The developing process of Han Taiwanese/indigenous cultures and history, especially the different colonial influences on politics, economics, cultures, and societies. Thus, this article tries to re-

think and restore colonial memories in resisting against the forgotten past, to reconstruct colonial history and the construction of self-culture.

This article closes in quotes from Rushdie in *Midnight Children*, children “must not become.... The bizarre creation of a rambling, diseased mind” (200), and it is the privilege of Taiwanese children “to be both masters and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and be [un]able to live and die in peace’ (463).

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